

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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Scan with your Smartphone for more information about Rock River Valley Wild Ones



All articles for the April 2015 newsletter, must be submitted to: Constance@wildonesrrvc.org by March 23, 2015.

Land Management in the Rock River Valley Prior to European Settlement
Thursday, March 19, 2015

Location: Rock Valley College,
Woodward Technology Center, WTC
3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114

Time: 7:00 p.m.



Edward J. Jakaitis III, Staff Archaeologist, Illinois State Archaeological Survey, and Prairie Research Institute, will broaden our understanding of this area's vegetational history with information about how prehistoric people manipulated the native landscape. Jakaitis says, "I have always been drawn to nature and the outdoors, exploring the natural world around my childhood home in Lake County, and eventually wandering about the prairie lands and forests of Illinois and Wisconsin, seeking the next fly fishing opportunity."

Jakaitis began working for the Illinois State Archaeological Survey (ISAS) in 2008, at which time he focused on cultural resource management (CRM) and North American archaeology. Cultural resource management is a profession within the field of archaeology that is focused towards the study and management of archaeological resources that can be affected by development activities.

In association with this work, Jakaitis has maintained an interest in the local history and archaeology of the Rockford region and northern Illinois, as a whole. He has worked to support local preservation of archaeological sites and artifact collections in both Winnebago and Stephenson Counties. He currently advises a privately funded CRM program on conservation lands south of the Rockford Airport. In this role he has supervised surveys that have identified a previously lost historic village and assisted in the development of a management plan for multiple groups of mounds constructed by prehistoric Native Americans.

Jakaitis explains, "as I have conducted this work I have come to realize the importance of having a strong knowledge of the natural environment." Although we attribute much of the altered landscape to Europeans' introduction of exotic species, humans have been impacting the natural environment from far into prehistory. By gaining an understanding of the pre-Euro American settlement vegetation of northern Illinois,

(continued on page 3)

Message from the Co-President Ginnie Watson



Ginnie Watson

photo by Jon McGinty

O Spring, Spring! Wherefore art thou Spring?

With apologies to William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, I can only hope that by now the answer to that query has been found. As I write this, the wind chill is well below zero and there is still a blanket of snow on the ground. What could possibly brighten my day? Our chapter's NATIVE PLANT SALES!

This is, perhaps, the hardest time of year for the avid gardener. Winter has been around a long time and we are all eager to get outside and plant something! Failing that, the best we can do is to get busy planning for this year's additions to our gardens and native habitats. There is an area in the front of my property that I have always called "the Wild Area", for good reason. It was a tangle of plant growth that harbored, for all I know, lions, and tigers, and bears. Last fall I spent three weeks clearing it out and, with the admirable help of my four-year old granddaughter, creating a winding path through it.



Now comes the fun part. This is a fresh canvas, the proverbial clean slate, on which to "paint" my new savanna habitat. There are trees, but some sun, as well. It has a northern exposure and has a bit of a slope, so I will have to choose wisely what to plant there. To help me in my search for the proper native plants for this site, I have

turned to our excellent chapter *Woodland and Prairie Plant brochures* created by Barbara Flores, Rick Freiman, and Tim Lewis. The plant descriptions found there tell me what each plant requires with respect to sun and water. They tell me how tall the plant will grow, as well as its botanical and common name and, if it flowers, what color the flower will be.



These brochures cover not only forbs (flowering plants), but ferns, grasses, and sedges, as well. The plant offerings are so extensive that I am sure to find just what I need

to give my new area a good start. Years ago, I planted trillium, blood root, and Jacob's ladder there. It will be interesting to see if they have thrived. To those favorites I will add rue anemone, wild geranium, shooting stars, and asters of some sort. Maidenhair ferns and lady ferns will find a home there, as well as sedges, lots of sedges. I have only just begun. The planning and plotting will continue until my list is too long and I must rethink it. But, isn't that the fun of it?

So, now, as I am unable to get out into my new habitat to get my hands dirty, I will enjoy spending time planning what native plants I will put there, thanks to our chapter's native plant sales brochures. Hmmm, perhaps this is not such a bad time of year after all!

I am very excited about the year ahead for our chapter and I hope that you are too. The educational programs and newsletters promise to be fascinating, the plant sales will bring new excitement to our landscapes, and the events and gatherings will be inspirational and fun. Thank you for your membership and participation to help make our chapter such a success.

(continued from page 1)

Jakaitis says he is able to better predict and interpret the archaeological record. Jakaitis is enthused about speaking to Wild Ones because he “believes this intersection of history and environment resonates with Wild Ones and aligns well with their mission for supporting native plant communities within our modern environment.”

People are intimately connected with their natural surroundings, and changes in the environment can influence the methods by which people make a living. The adaptive strategies practiced by human societies can have an equally important influence on the environment. Adaptive strategies such as stone tool technology and prairie burning are the result of a mixing of livelihood systems, innovation, and temporary coping strategies that eventually become entrenched as traditions in society. This presentation will consider the causes and effects of changes in adaptive strategies and the environment. We will discuss how archaeologists recognize these changes in the material culture and distribution of that material culture on the landscape over time. Additionally, we will discuss how native plants served more than just a utilitarian purpose. Historical accounts and archaeological evidence suggest that certain plant species such as tobacco and corn were tied to religious practices and cosmological beliefs.

Archaeology can offer a greater appreciation for the rehabilitation of Illinois’ native plant species by understanding the interrelation of prehistoric lifeways with the landscape.

The program is free and open to the public. Come early and browse the library, merchandise tables, and refreshments table. We welcome and appreciate new members! Call 815-627-0344.

Submitted by Jamie B. Johannsen, Program Chair

Lifelong Learning Kim Lowman Vollmer, Youth Education and Grant Chair

Education is one of my passions, along with nature. Learning brings happiness, is enjoyable, and boosts confidence. Learning does not stop after you graduate from school. Henry Ford once said, “Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.” If you are more cognitively active, it reduces your chance of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. So why not combine learning and nature and attend a conference, seminar, or workshop this year? The Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones has a scholarship program for board members and general chapter members.

To be eligible for this scholarship, the proposed learning experience needs to be compatible with the Wild Ones. The maximum scholarship is \$50 per member. After attending the workshop, seminar, or conference, scholarship recipients are required to write a short synopsis of the event, not to exceed 500 words, no later than one month following the activity. You can find information regarding our super scholarship program on our chapter website (<http://wildonesrrvc.org>) in the Resources drop-down list. I would also be happy to send you the application and talk with you about this program. Watch our newsletter and other publications for events. Enjoy your continued education on native plants!

Board of Directors in Action Cathy Johnson, Secretary

Highlights of the activities of the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter board of directors, as discussed at the February 21, 2015 board meeting include the following:

- Website enhancements and improvements continue through the dedication and ongoing efforts of Shey Lowman.
- The membership brochure has been revised and printed.
- Board members will create thorough descriptions of what they do by tracking all activities this year as they occur. At the end of the year, documents will exist, explaining the tasks of each position, with specific details of what, when, and how.
- Plans for the woodland plant sale are underway and brochures are now available. Orders will be due by April 20, and plants can be picked up on April 24 and 25.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, April 16 at 6:00 p.m. at Thunder Bay Grille, 7652 Potawatomi Tr., Rockford, IL. The meeting officially starts at 6:00 p.m., but many come at 5:00 to purchase their dinner. **All chapter members** are welcome and invited to attend board meetings.

February Meeting Recap

Cynthia Nelson

photos by Tim Lewis

Ephemerals: Harbingers of Spring



Kris Koch, the Education Coordinator for the Rotary Botanical Gardens in Janesville, Wisconsin, brought us a much-appreciated break on a cold winter night by sharing photographs and information about the beautiful native woodland wildflowers we can look forward to seeing in coming weeks.

The word “ephemeral” comes from the Greek *ephēmeros* which means “lasting a day,” and refers to something that is transitory or short-lived. Our spring ephemerals have a short period of time between when the snow melts and when the trees form an overhead canopy in which to grow, flower, be pollinated, and set seed. During this time they need to store resources for the year in their fleshy roots and other underground structures (e.g. rhizomes, tubers, corms). Spring ephemerals are plants of the deciduous woodlands. They take advantage of the spring sunlight, as well as the moisture and nutrients from soil enriched by decaying twigs, leaves, and plants. Once the trees are actively growing, they take up water and nutrients from the soil; once they have leafed out, they block sunlight.

The weather of spring is unpredictable, with overnight frosts common and late snowfalls possible. Spring ephemerals are typically low-growing, and so are protected from extreme temperatures by the warmth of the soil, with its carpet of leaf litter. Other adaptations that protect the plants from the elements include hairy stems and leaves that trap the heat; protective leaves, such as those seen on the emerging bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*); outer flower parts that protect flower buds, as seen in the twinleaf (*Jeffersonia diphylla*); and the closing of flowers as a response to darkness and temperature changes (which is termed “nyctinasty”).

Early flowers require early pollinators. Native bees are important in this regard. Non-native honey bees will not fly when the temperature drops below about 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Bumblebees, solitary native bees, bee flies, and early butterflies seek the nectar from available flowers, and are important pollinators for spring-flowering plants. Another important mutually-beneficial relationship is with ants. Seeds of many spring ephemerals are dispersed by ants. Seeds are produced by some plants (including bloodroot, spring beauty, and Dutchman’s breeches) with attached fleshy structures (elaiosomes) that are carried away to the nest by ants.

After the elaiosomes are eaten by the ant larvae, the ants carry the seed away to their nutrient-rich disposal area, where they have a good chance of germinating.

An example of adaptation to early spring is seen in the earliest flowering native plant in northern Illinois, the skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), which can emerge as early as February. The plant is named for the odor emitted by the tiny yellow flowers, which are on a stalk that is covered by a mottled deep red spathe, or hood. The skunk cabbage is thermogenic, which means that it generates heat. The plant generates enough heat to melt snow and ice surrounding the flower, and so the plant can emerge when the ground is very cold. The heat also spreads the foul odor of the plant, which attracts early flies and carrion beetles that pollinate the plant. This interesting plant might be encountered in a moist area of the woodlands in early spring; it is unlikely to be sought after for the home landscape.

Another example of adaptation to spring conditions is seen in a flower more likely to be included in the home landscape. The Hepatica, which can be found peeking through last year’s leaves in the early spring, has two varieties, round-lobed (*Hepatica nobilis var. obtusa*) and sharp-lobed (*Hepatica nobilis var. acuta*). Names for plants come from various sources; for example skunk cabbage is named for its odor. Hepatica, which has the common name liverleaf, is named because its three-part leaves are considered to resemble a liver. The lovely flowers may be blue, but are sometimes pink or nearly white. The individual flowers are short-lived, with successive flowering in a colony of the plants having a blooming period of two to three weeks. Hepatica flower stalks and young basal leaves are covered with downy hairs that protect them from the cold. The leaves of the Hepatica persist on the plant through the winter, and are able to begin photosynthesis before the new leaves form in the spring. Because of this, some writers do not consider Hepatica to be an ephemeral. Lists of “true spring ephemerals” can be found that include only plants that completely disappear above ground after blooming. These lists are admittedly tentative, in part because there can be variation within a species depending on the region or on the level of light and moisture in a particular situation. The bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*), for example, can be persistent in some places, although it goes dormant if the soil is not consistently moist.

The following are some examples of spring-flowering woodland plants that we should be able to see in our local natural areas. Consider whether you agree that these are all spring ephemerals.

Spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), which has small

February Meeting Recap (cont'd)

white or pink-white flowers with pink stripes and grass-like leaves. The stripes on the petals guide pollinators to the nectaries (the small organs that produce nectar). Flowers are short-lived, lasting about three days each, and are nyctinastic.

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), which is named for the red juice in its thick rhizome, has a single flower on a stem. After the protective single leaf opens, it continues to enlarge after the flower petals drop, which they do after a day or two.

Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) are aptly named, as the pink buds open as blue flowers that hang like bells. They grow in rich, moist woods, often profusely, and die back to the ground after blooming.

Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*) grows from tubers. Individual flowers resemble breeches which are upside down on the nodding flowers. The leaves are bluish green and have a feathery appearance.

Squirrel corn (*Dicentra canadensis*) is similar to Dutchman's breeches, but its flowers are more heart-shaped. The rhizome has yellow corn-like structures, which is the basis of the common name of this plant.

White trout lily (*Erythronium albidum*) is likely to



Janet Giesen and Shey Lowman at the registration table

be found in colonies, with dappled elliptical leaves appearing earlier than the flowers. The white flowers hang downward, with the flower petals curving back.

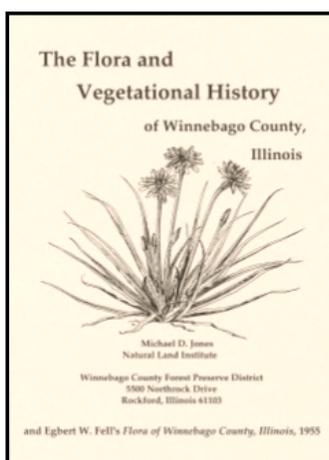
As we look forward to our chapter's Woodland Plant Sale, we can learn more about our spring-flowering native plants, and consider including them in our own landscape in order to enjoy their beauty and support our native wildlife.

Merchandise Must Haves Cynthia Chmell, Merchandise Coordinator

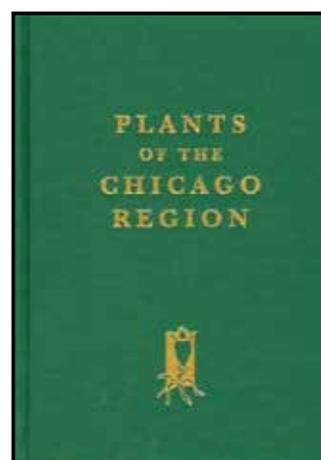
It's native plant sale season! Prepare your plant orders with the information in these valuable references. Want to know what is native to your county? At least one of these books will help you. They are also available through our lending library, but there is no substitute for having your own copy to bookmark and scribble notes in.



Distribution of Illinois Vascular Plants
Robert H. Mohlenbrock and Douglas M. Ladd
Out of print, this is the only plant survey that includes every county in Illinois. Available in very limited quantities, get yours while you can. **\$30.00**



The Flora and Vegetational History of Winnebago County, Illinois
Michael D. Jones, Natural Land Institute.
The definitive source for native plants in Winnebago and surrounding counties. This book also includes Egbert Fell's *Flora of Winnebago County, Illinois, 1955* which is out of print and difficult to find. **\$15.00**



Plants of the Chicago Region, 4th Ed.
Floyd Swink & Gerould Wilhelm
THE authoritative reference for native plants. The only book with specific plant details, including plant communities and "coefficients of conservatism" ratings for each plant in order to determine a natural area assessment. **\$45.00** (\$50 retail)

Meet the Board

Periodically, we will introduce you to members of the Board of Directors of the Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones so that you may meet the hardworking people who keep this chapter on the cutting edge. They are all volunteers who give of their time and energy to make this chapter the benchmark for chapters just starting up.

Cathy Johnson, Secretary



I think an appreciation of native plants, and nature in general, was born from the many years of my childhood spent outdoors in undeveloped areas on the southern edge of San Antonio, Texas. Bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, buttercups, and flowering cacti were some of my favorite plants. Their lure was complemented by an assortment of birds, butterflies, and other insects, and reptiles. I was fortunate to have a best friend who lived conveniently across the street and who was as curious about these things as I was, and we spent as many hours as we could exploring and learning about nature, particularly plants and insects. In those days we collected insects using nets made by my friend's mother from old sheer curtains sewn around metal clothes hangers formed into circles and secured to old wooden broom or mop handles. We filled dozens of cigar boxes with preserved insects suspended on mounting pins. These days I try never to kill an insect for any reason, perhaps partly as a form of penance for my less enlightened youthful behavior.

I joined Wild Ones in 2010, to learn more about regional native plants, and also to indulge an interest in the related birds, butterflies, and other insects that rely on them. Having grown up mostly in a hot and dry climate, I have to admit to never having truly acclimated to Midwest winters, and feeding and watching birds, and waiting for the emergence of spring ephemerals has proven therapeutic during the long cold days of November to March. I am very appreciative of the learning opportunities that Wild Ones has provided, and for the privilege of serving on a board with such knowledgeable and experienced individuals. It has been an extraordinary experience full of awesome and inspiring people, programs, and activities.

Membership Application/Renewal



Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

- I prefer receiving the color digital version of the monthly newsletter as a PDF file via email.
- Check here if you do not want to be published in the annual January membership roster.

Please select your membership category:

	Wild	Wilder	Wildest
Household Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$37	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100+
Household Lifetime Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1500 (Or 3 annual payments of \$500)		
Professional Educator Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$90	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150
Not-for-Profit Affiliate Organization Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$90	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150
Associate Membership (limited income/student)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20		
Business Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> \$600	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,200
Gift Household Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$37	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100+

If this is a gift membership, please put your name below to let the recipient know it is from you:

- I would like to make an additional donation to support the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter for: \$ _____

Please make your **check payable** to **Wild Ones** and mail it to:

I have enclosed \$ _____ to start/ renew my membership for _____ year(s).

Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter
1643 N Alpine Rd Ste 104
PMB 233
Rockford, IL 61107-1464

Membership Update Shey Lowman, Membership Co-Chair

A membership e-form and our membership brochure describing the benefits of membership are both available on the chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org). Click on **Join/Renew** under the **Membership** tab. You can renew (or join) with any major credit card through PayPal (no PayPal account required) by using our website. Go ahead and rack up your rewards points and we all win. We appreciate your support!

220 memberships as of February 23, 2015!

Welcome to new members!

Norah Nelson, Rockford, IL
 Sylvia Parson, Loves Park, IL
 Brian & Kathryn Sewell, Rockford, IL

All of our new members are identified with a green ribbon on their meeting name badge. Please introduce yourself to them and help us welcome new members to our great chapter!

62 attended the February meeting, including 14 guests.

A big thank you to our February meeting volunteers!

Greeters: Janaan Lewis, Judy Letoureau

Refreshments: Anita Johnson and Cynthia Nelson,
 and to Barbara Flores for bringing mugs

AV/Sound Equipment: Bob Arevalo

Meeting Recap for the Newsletter: Cynthia Nelson

Photographer: Tim Lewis

Library Assistants: Barbara Flores, Cathy Johnson

It is preferred that renewal memberships be sent directly to the chapter for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. Please use the address below:

Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter
 1643 N Alpine Rd Ste 104
 PMB 233
 Rockford, IL 61107-1464

Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter and your national Journal address labels. You will be mailed a renewal reminder two months prior to your expiration date with a completed membership form and return envelope for your convenience.

Please send address and email address changes to Shey Lowman at shey@wildonesrrvc.org.

Thirty percent of all dues paid are returned to the chapter by National Wild Ones to support our chapter activities. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

Anniversaries

Congratulations to this month's loyal member!

15 Years

Jerry Paulson, Caledonia, IL

Thank you for your continuing support!

2015 Chapter Programs and Events

March 19 7:00-9:00 p.m.	Land Management in This Area Prior to European Settlement	Ed Jakaitis, Archaeologist, Illinois Archaeological Survey	Rock Valley College Woodward Technology Center
Mar-April	Native Woodland Plant Sale Orders taken during this time	Barbara Flores Coordinator	815-289-8602
	Native Prairie Plant Sale Orders taken during this time	Rick & Deb Freiman Coordinators	815-871-7424
April 16 7:00-9:00 p.m.	Starting From Scratch: Planning Your Native Landscape	Rebecca Olson Olson Ecological Solutions	Rock Valley College Woodward Technology Center
May 15 7:00-9:00 p.m.	Local Ferns for Native Gardens	Ed Cope Restoration Ecologist, Natural Land Institute	Rock Valley College Woodward Technology Center
June 18 7:00-9:00 p.m.	Propagating Conservative Natives to Support Restoration	Rob Sulski Stewardship Educator	Rock Valley College Woodward Technology Center
July 16 7:00-9:00 p.m.	Members only Summer Evening Social & Potluck Tour of Native Landscaping	Home of Claudia Fleeman	4411 Dorset Dr. Rockford, IL 61114

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.
 Please contact Jamie Johannsen 815-494-6977 for more information.



NATIVE PLANTS. NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Pambi Camacho
1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104
PMB 233
Rockford, IL 61107

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is **3/1/2015**, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last *Wild Ones Journal* until you activate your membership

You may receive a renewal notice from both the National organization and your chapter. Your membership information will be updated quicker if you renew through your chapter so you won't miss an Issue of the chapter newsletter.

Mail your renewal:
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104
PMB 233
Rockford, IL 61107

Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter

Board of Directors and Chairs

Co-Presidents: Ginnie Watson 815-398-0138
ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org
Lenae Weichel 815-282-5482
lenae@wildonesrrvc.org

Vice President: Jerry Paulson 815-222-4414
jerry@wildonesrrvc.org

Secretary: Cathy Johnson 815-978-0865
cathy@wildonesrrvc.org

Treasurer: Janet Giesen 815-899-6139
janet@wildonesrrvc.org

Membership Chair: Shey Lowman
815-757-4456 shey@wildonesrrvc.org

Newsletter Chair: Pambi Camacho
815-332-7637 pambi@wildonesrrvc.org

Plant Rescues & Seed Collection Chair:
Mary Anne Mathwich 815 721-5187.
maryanne@wildonesrrvc.org

Program Chair: Jamie Johannsen
815-494-6977 jamie@wildonesrrvc.org

Show Me/Help Me Chair:
Claudia Fleeman 815-985-5158
claudia@wildonesrrvc.org

Youth Education & Grants Chair:
Kim Lowman Vollmer 815-397-6044
kim@wildonesrrvc.org

Appointed Coordinators
Woodland Plant Sale Coordinator:
Barbara Flores 815-289-8602
barbara@wildonesrrvc.org

Prairie Plant Sale Coordinators:
Rick Freiman 815-871-7424
rick@wildonesrrvc.org
Deb Freiman 815-871-7424
deb@wildonesrrvc.org

Tree & Shrub Sale Coordinator: John Peterson
815-979-8539 john@wildonesrrvc.org

Booth Coordinator, FREC Representative:
Tim Lewis 815-874-3468 tim@wildonesrrvc.org

Editorial Coordinator: Constance McCarthy
815-282-0316 constance@wildonesrrvc.org

Facebook Coordinator: Marilyn Heneghan
815-389-7869 marilyn@wildonesrrvc.org

Library Coordinator: Ginnie Watson
815-398-0138 ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org

Mentor Coordinator: Melanie Costello
815-645-8430 melanie@wildonesrrvc.org

Merchandise Coordinator:
Cynthia Chmell 815-969-7435
chmell@wildonesrrvc.org

Publicity Coordinator: Doreen O'Brien
815-985-4064 doreen@wildonesrrvc.org

Volunteer Coordinator: Cynthia Nelson
815-758-8978 cynthia@wildonesrrvc.org

Website Coordinator: Shey Lowman
815-757-4456 shey@wildonesrrvc.org

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Rock Valley College/Woodward Technology Center, WTC, 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114
Special meetings, outings, and events are scheduled periodically and sometimes replace the regular meeting time/place. Contact any officer to confirm information about our next meeting.

Wild Ones Annual Memberships: Household \$37, Associate (limited income/full-time student) \$20, Affiliate Non-Profit Organization or Educator \$90, Business \$250. Your entire membership contribution is tax deductible. Contact Membership Co-Chairs for additional information or to join.

815-627-0344 • Join online with any major credit card at www.WildOnesRRVC.org

Wild Ones Mission

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restorations and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.